



1823

# First Fruits of Australian Poetry

Barron Field

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# FIRST FRUITS OF AUSTRALIAN POETRY

by Barron Field

Correctly reprinted from the rare first edition of 1819  
with three poems included in the second edition of 1823

*Whereto is appended*  
a REVIEW for Leigh Hunt's EXAMINER 1820  
*by Charles Lamb*

Wood-engravings by RODERICK SHAW

Edited with a preamble and notes  
by RICHARD EDWARDS



*Imprinted by Richard Edwards*  
*& Roderick Shaw at the*  
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*The frontispiece is engraved from a miniature  
in the Mitchell Library*

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## PREAMBLE

*We reprint these antic verses because they formed the first book of poems published in Australia, because their author shone, however modestly, amid a brilliant constellation, and because, simple as we are, we like them. To have written the First Fruits is no undying triumph; but to have been a companion of Charles Lamb and Leigh Hunt, and a friend of Coleridge, Wordsworth and Henry Crabb Robinson, surely is felicitous beyond question.*

Barron Field however was not merely suffered in this distinguished company, nor is it to be assumed that Lamb, in the jocular Review printed herewith, has sacrificed truth to kindness in comparing Field with Marvell. He writes to Bernard Barton in 1829: "... turn to a poem called the Kangaroo. It is in the best way of our old poets, if I mistake not." Had he not meant this, it would have been unwontedly cruel of Lamb to assure Field that both Coleridge and Wordsworth were "hugely taken" with his poem.

We wish that as much could be said for *Botany-Bay Flowers*, which for the most part is sad stuff indeed.

Of the four poems added to the edition of 1823, the three we reprint deserve to be better known; the fourth: *Verses, in answer to those of Mr Montgomery*, etc., not even

desire for completeness, nor consideration for antiquarians, could persuade us to revive.

Finally, in answer to those who dismiss Field's verse as worthless jingle, we call attention to two poems in the *Examiner*. Of the first Edmund Blunden writes\*: "... literary interest still clings to an elegy by Barron Field... in the Wordsworthian manner, dignified and significant, showing wherein the author might evoke the appreciation of his friend Lamb." The second, a delightful poem in Lamb's manner: *On seeing Mrs K—B—, aged upwards of Eighty, nurse an Infant*, is mistaken for Lamb's own work by two recent editors, Lucas and Hutchinson. We may conclude therefore that Barron Field, though sometimes short of inspiration, had at least a puff or so of the divine afflatus.

Field was born 23 October 1786, son of the Apothecary to Christ's Hospital. Leigh Hunt was his contemporary in this famous school, which Lamb, eight years Field's senior, occasionally revisited as an "old boy". It was either through this connection or through his cousin, a clerk at India House, that Field gained access to Lamb's circle. During the period (1808–1815) of his greatest intimacy with the Lambs, Field supported himself by occasional journalism, while reading law at the Inner Temple; he was for a while dramatic critic to the *Times* and an early contributor to Hunt's *Examiner*. In 1813 he accompanied the fiery editor to his prison—a curious episode in the youth of a judge, which Hunt recalled with amusement in later years—and in 1815 he fared with Charles and Mary Lamb on the immortal visit to

\* 'Leigh Hunt's "Examiner" examined'; 1928.

Mackery End. His analysis of Blackstone's *Commentaries* was compiled about this time.

In 1816 he married Jane Carncroft, to whom Lamb has addressed some verses, and in August of that year set out for Sydney as Supreme Court judge of the colony, arriving in February 1817. His prose style shows to advantage in the accounts of this, and of his return voyage, published in the *London Magazine*.

This was a violent uprooting for a man of Field's tastes, and homesickness finds expression in his poems. His criticism of public affairs acquired the severity of irritation, and despite a real concern for its future, he was far from popular in the colony. On the other hand, Macquarie spoke well of him, Commissioner Bigge had no fault to find in his administration, and the unpopularity of judges was symptomatic of the turbulent years. The Rev. Dr. John Dunmore Lang's reference to him as a "weak silly judge" and his derision (in *Poems; Sacred and Secular*) of Field's poetic pretensions, do more discredit the good doctor than the judge. Field was at least as much a poet as Dr. Lang, and it was certainly not weakness that led him into conflict with Governor Brisbane. However, if not "silly" he was at least misguided in the activities, more political than politic, that marred his later years in the colony. He was undoubtedly guilty of minor partialities which may yet exercise our legal historians. It is enough to say here that the sum of these indiscretions was his recall in 1824.

The Fields had a house in Macquarie Place, where the Macarthurs, the Blaxlands, the Pipers and other worthies were entertained, and where in his turn Field was host to the Philosophical Society, of which he was an active foundation member. Papers read before this,

and before the Agricultural Society (Field was either first or second president of this society, in 1822), together with articles by other hands—including notably Oxley's account of the Moreton Bay expedition—and with the later text of the *First Fruits*, were published as *Geographical Memoirs on New South Wales*, under the editorship of Barron Field, in 1825.

In 1819 he wrote for the *Memoirs of Hardy Vaux* what Crabb Robinson calls a "flippant" preface; and in the same year had printed by the second Government Printer, George Howe, the *First Fruits of Australian Poetry*, consisting of two poems in a quarto of a dozen pages, and issued for private circulation. Charles Lamb reviewed this 'slim volume' in 1820. During his sojourn in the Antipodes Field maintained correspondence with Lamb, whose surviving letters include the short epistle we append, and the "tissue of truth & fiction" later to be published as the essay "Distant Correspondents." A second edition of the *First Fruits*, with four extra poems, was printed by Robert Howe, George Howe's son and successor, in 1823.

Leigh Hunt welcomes his friend's repatriation with an *Epistle to B. F. Esq.*, in the *New Monthly*; and Lamb writes to Hunt: "Barron Field is come home from Sydney . . . He is plump and friendly; his wife really a very superior woman. He resumes the Bar." Shortly afterwards he accepted a post of crown-prosecutor for Ceylon, but in 1829 went to Gibraltar as chief-justice. Little is known of his life there, save for an episode in which the young Disraeli, on the grand tour of Europe, found him platitudinous, pompous, and a bore. This sketch, though exaggerated by a young man's impatience, is not entirely out of character. Crabb Robinson writes:

"Barron Field talks amusingly, though there is something of grand *ha!* about him." Field claimed descent from Oliver Cromwell, affecting the Protector's arms upon a seal, which Lamb once borrowed in ironic glee to adorn a letter to Sir Walter Scott. These minor arrogances are offset however by an unimposing kindness and good sense that won him many friends.

Field's *Spanish Sketches*, a book of verse privately issued at Gibraltar in 1841, must have been printed long after his return to England if, as seems likely, he resigned his post in 1835. In that year he wrote for the *Annual Biography* a memoir of Coleridge, and in 1836 of Lamb, both worthy of their subject. He had also written a full life of Wordsworth, of which that poet forbade publication, and which still remains unpublished.

Between 1841 and his death at Torquay, 11 April 1846, Field edited five texts of Heywood for the Shakespeare Society. Critical insight and sound scholarship preserve their value, and if Barron Field must be denied the title of poet, some place of honour should be given him among those who have smoothed our path to the older writers.

Both editions of the *First Fruits* are extremely rare. A copy of the first was purchased in 1927 by a Sydney buyer for £100. The National Library has a copy of the second (a fine octavo) presented by the author to S. T. Coleridge.

An inaccurate version of the original poems and the first sonnet is given by D. B. Sladen in *A Century of Australian Song*. Our text is reset as exactly as human frailty permits from copies in the Mitchell Library, to which we are deeply indebted.

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*also works of and about* Lamb, Hunt, H. C. Robinson,  
Coleridge, Wordsworth *and others.*

## FIRST FRUITS

OF

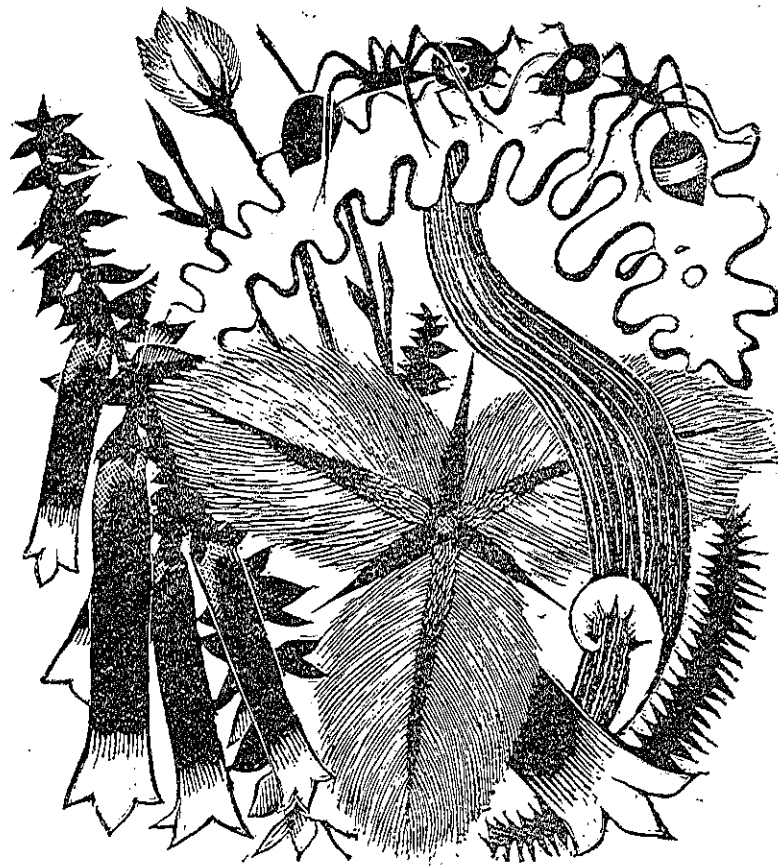
## AUSTRALIAN POETRY.

I FIRST ADVENTURE. FOLLOW ME WHO LIST:  
AND BE THE SECOND AUSTRAL HARMONIST.

*Sydney, New South Wales.*

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION.

1819.



## BOTANY-BAY FLOWERS

—“juvatque novos decerpere flores,  
“Insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam,  
“Unde prius nulli velarint tempora Musae.”

LUCRETIVS, lib. I.

“Fairies use flowers for their charactery.”

SHAKESP. *Merry Wives.*

GOD of this Planet! for that name best fits  
The purblind view, which men of this “dim spot”  
Can take of THEE, the GOD of Suns and Spheres!  
What desert forests, and what barren plains,  
Lie unexplor’d by European eye,  
In what our Fathers call’d *the Great South Land!*  
Ev’n in those tracts, which we have visited,  
Tho’ thousands of thy vegetable works  
Have, by the hand of Science (as ’tis call’d)  
Been gather’d and dissected, press’d and dried,  
Till all their blood and beauty are extinct;  
And nam’d in barb’rous Latin, men’s surnames,  
With terminations of the Roman tongue;  
Yet tens of thousands have escap’d the search,  
The decimation, the alive-impaling,  
Nick-naming of God’s creatures—’scap’d it all.  
Still fewer (perhaps none) of all these Flowers  
Have been by Poet sung. Poets are few,  
And Botanists are many, and good cheap.



When first I landed on AUSTRALIA'S Shore,  
 (I neither Botanist nor Poet truly,  
 But less a Seeker after Facts than Truth),  
 A Flower gladden'd me above the rest,  
 Shap'd trumpet-like, which from a palmy stalk  
 Hung clust'ring, hyacinthine, crimson red  
 Melting to white. Botanic Science calls  
 The plant *epacris grandiflora*, gives  
 Its class, description, habitat, then draws  
 A line. The Bard of Truth would moralize  
 The Flower's beauty, which caught first my eye;  
 But, having liv'd the circle of the year,  
 I found (and then he'd sing in Beauty's praise)  
 This the sole plant that never ceas'd to bloom.  
 Nor here would stop:—at length first love and fair,  
 And fair and sweet, and sweet and constant, pall,  
 (Alas, for poor Humanity!) and then  
 The new, the pretty, and the unexpected,  
 Ensnare the fancy. Thus it was with me,  
 When first I spied the Flowret in the grass,  
 Which forms the subject of this humble Song,  
 And (treason to my wedded Flower) cried:—  
 Th' Australian "fringed Violet"  
 Shall henceforward be my pet!  
 Oh! had this Flow'r been seen by him  
 Who call'd Europa's "violets dim  
 Sweeter than lids of Juno's eyes,\*"  
 He had not let this touch suffice,  
 But had pronounc'd it (I am certain)  
 Of Juno's eye the "fringed curtain"—  
 Pick'd phrase for eye-lid, which the Poet

\* SHAKESPEARE. *Winter's Tale*.

Has us'd elsewhere; and he will know it,  
 Who in his dramas is well vers'd:  
*Vide* The Tempest, Act the First.—  
 But I am wand'ring from my duty,  
 First to describe my fringe-ey'd Beauty.  
 'Tis then a floss-edg'd lilac Flower,  
 That shuts at early ev'ning's hour,  
 When the Sun has lost his power,  
 Like a Fairy's parasol  
 (If Fairies walk by day at all);  
 Or, it may quicker gain belief,  
 To call it her silk neckerchief,  
 Dropt before she blest the place  
 With her last night's dancing grace:  
 For surely Fairies haunt a land,  
 Where they may have the free command  
 Of beetles, flowers, butterflies,  
 Of such enchanting tints and dyes:  
 Not beetles black (forbidden things),  
 But beetles of enamel'd wings,  
 Or rather, coats of armour, boss'd  
 And studded till the ground-work's lost:  
 Then, for all other insects,—here  
 Queen Mab would have no cause to fear  
 For her respectable approach,  
 Lest she could not set up her coach.  
 Here's a fine grub for a coach-maker,  
 Good as in Fairy-land Long-Acre;  
 And very-long-indeed-legg'd spinners,  
 To make her waggon-spokes, the sinners!  
 And here are winged grasshoppers;  
 And, as to gnats for waggoners,  
 We have mosquitoes will suffice

To drive her team of atomies.\*  
 If therefore she and her regalia  
 Have never yet been in Australia,  
 I recommend a voyage to us,  
 On board the Paper Nautilus;  
 But I incline to the opinion  
 That we are now in her dominion;  
 For we dream all those self-same dreams,  
 Which (from Mercutio) it seems  
 We owe to her deliv'rancy,  
 As midwife and queen faery.  
 Puck talks of putting round the earth,  
 In forty minutes time, a girth:  
 Ob'ron, tho' he "the groves may tread  
 "Till th' eastern gate, all fiery red,  
 "Open on Neptune with fair beams,  
 "And turn to gold his salt green streams."  
 Yet chuses he, "in silence sad,  
 "To trip after the night's shade:  
 "He the globe can compass soon,  
 "Swifter than the wand'ring moon:"  
 And Queen Titania's made to say  
 That she had been in India;  
 And had a mortal vot'ress there;  
 As I hope too, among the Fair  
 Of this young land of Shakespeare's tongue,

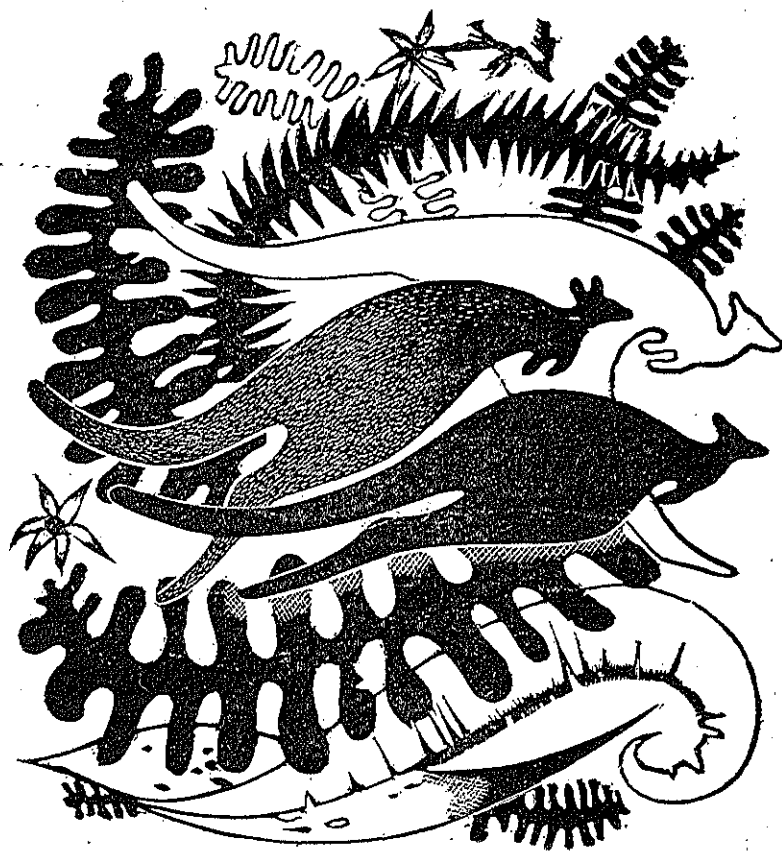
\* "She is the fairies' midwife; and she comes  
 "Drawn with a team of little atomies——  
 "Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners' legs,  
 "The cover of the wings of grasshoppers;  
 "Her waggoner a small grey-coated gnat;  
 "Her chariot  
 "Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,  
 "Time out of mind the fairies' coach-makers."

SHAKESP. *Romeo and Juliet*.

That she has here:—I've else judg'd wrong.  
 Enough then of the Fairies and the Flower;  
 And, as mistaking Puck must sure have squeez'd  
 The juice of that same little purple flower,  
 (Why may it not, ye Botanists, be call'd  
 A species of *Love in Idleness*?  
 Only because perhaps Jussieu would say  
 It is no violet\*), and dropt the liquor  
 Into my sleeping eyes, to make me change  
 My love, as erst Lysander did to Helen  
 From Hermia: so may the Fairy King,  
 Just Oberon, see good to break the spell  
 With the epacris' juice, of virtuous might  
 To take from eyes all error, that when next  
 They wake, all this may seem a fruitless dream.  
 "My heart with that but as guest-wise sojourn'd,  
 "And now to this flow'r is at home return'd,  
 "There to remain.  
 "Be as thou wast wont to be;  
 "See as thou wast wont to see:  
 "Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower  
 "Hath such force and blessed power.†"

\* It is of the order *asphodeleas*—the *arthropodium fimbriatum* of Brown.

† SHAKESPEARE, *Mid. Night's Dream*.



## THE KANGAROO

———"mixtumque genus, prolesque biformis."  
VIRG. Aen. vi.

KANGAROO, Kangaroo!  
Thou Spirit of Australia,  
That redeems from utter failure,  
From perfect desolation,  
And warrants the creation  
Of this fifth part of the Earth,  
Which would seem an after-birth,  
Not conceiv'd in the Beginning  
(For God bless'd His work at first,  
And saw that it was good),  
But emerg'd at the first sinning,  
When the ground was therefore curst;—  
And hence this barren wood!

Kangaroo, Kangaroo!  
Tho' at first sight we should say,  
In thy nature that there may  
Contradiction be involv'd,  
Yet, like discord well resolv'd,

It is quickly harmoniz'd.  
Sphynx or mermaid realiz'd,  
Or centaur unfabulous,  
Would scarce be more prodigious,  
Or Pegasus poetical,  
Or hippogriff—chimeras all!  
But, what Nature would compile,  
Nature knows to reconcile;  
And Wisdom, ever at her side,  
Of all her children's justified.

She had made the squirrel fragile;  
She had made the bounding hart;  
But a third so strong and agile  
Was beyond ev'n Nature's art;  
So she join'd the former two  
In thee, Kangaroo!  
To describe thee, it is hard:  
Converse of the caméopard,  
Which beginneth camel-wise,  
But endeth of the panther size,  
Thy fore half, it would appear,  
Had belong'd to some "small deer,"  
Such as liveth in a tree;  
By thy hinder, thou should'st be  
A large animal of chace,  
Bounding o'er the forest's space;—  
Join'd by some divine mistake,  
None but Nature's hand can make—  
Nature, in her wisdom's play,  
On Creation's holiday.

For howsoe'er anomalous,

Thou yet art not incongruous,  
Repugnant or preposterous.  
Better-proportion'd animal,  
More graceful or ethereal,  
Was never follow'd by the hound,  
With fifty steps to thy one bound.  
Thou can'st not be amended: no;  
Be as thou art; thou best art so.

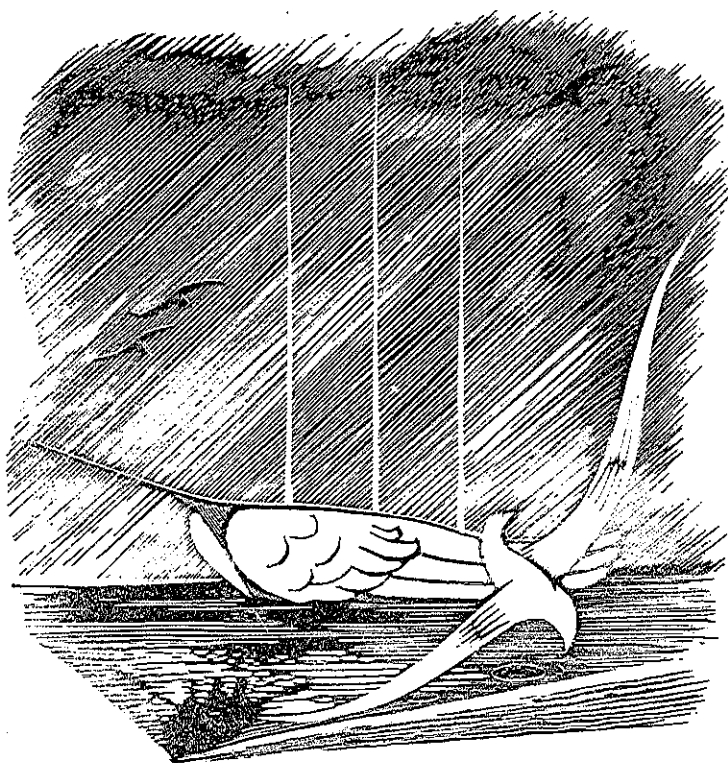
When sooty swans are once more rare,  
And duck-moles\* the Museum's care,  
Be still the glory of this land,  
Happiest Work of finest Hand!

\* The *cygnus niger* of Juvenal is no *rara avis* in Australia; and time, has here given ample proof of the *ornythorinchus paradoxus*.

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POEMS  
INCLUDED IN  
THE SECOND EDITION  
1823

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ON READING  
THE CONTROVERSY  
BETWEEN LORD BYRON AND MR BOWLES

Anticipation is to a young country what antiquity is to an old.

---

WHETHER a ship's poetic?—Bowles would own,  
If here he dwelt, where Nature is prosaic,  
Unpicturesque, unmusical, and where  
Nature-reflecting Art is not yet born;—  
A land without antiquities, with one,  
And only one, poor spot of classic ground,  
(That on which Cook first landed)—where, instead  
Of heart-communings with ancestral relicks,  
Which purge the pride while they exalt the mind,  
We've nothing left us but anticipation,  
Better (I grant) than utter selfishness,  
Yet too o'erweening—too American;  
Where's no past tense, the ign'rant present's all;  
Or only great by the *All hail, hereafter!*  
One foot of Future's glass should rest on Past;  
Where Hist'ry is not, Prophecy is guess—  
If here he dwelt, Bowles (I repeat) would own  
A ship's the only poetry we see.  
For, first, she brings us “news of human kind,”

---

Of friends and kindred, whom perchance she held  
 As visitors, that she might be a link,  
 Connecting the fond fancy of far friendship,  
 A few short months before, and whom she may  
 In a few more, perhaps, receive again.  
 Next is a ship poetic, forasmuch  
 As in this spireless\* city and prophane,  
 She is to my home-wand'ring phantasy,  
 With her tall anch'ring masts, a three-spir'd minster,  
 Vane-crown'd; her bell our only half-hour chimes.  
 Lastly, a ship is poetry to me,  
 Since piously I trust, in no long space,  
 Her wings will bear me from this prose-dull land.

\* This was written before the erection of St. James's Church. The other epithet will not become obsolete so soon.

SONNET,  
 ON VISITING THE SPOT  
 WHERE  
 CAPTAIN COOK AND SIR JOSEPH BANKS  
 FIRST LANDED IN BOTANY BAY

HERE fix the tablet. This must be the place  
 Where our Columbus of the South did land;  
 He saw the Indian village on that sand,  
 And on this rock first met the simple race  
 Of Australasia, who presum'd to face  
 With lance and spear his musquet. Close at hand  
 Is the clear stream, from which his vent'rous band  
 Refresh'd their ship; and thence a little space  
 Lies Sutherland, their shipmate; for the sound  
 Of Christian burial better did proclaim  
 Possession, than the flag, in England's name.  
 These were the *commelinae* Banks first found;  
 But where's the tree with the ship's wood-carv'd  
                   fame?  
 Fix then th' Ephesian\* brass. 'Tis classic ground.

\* The Ephesians were the first who erected brazen trophies. The Greeks and Romans preferred wood, as not perpetuating hostility.

---

SONNET,  
ON AFFIXING  
A TABLET TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
CAPTAIN COOK AND SIR JOSEPH BANKS  
AGAINST THE ROCK OF THEIR FIRST LANDING IN  
BOTANY BAY

---

I HAVE been musing what our Banks had said  
And Cook, had they had second sight, that here  
(Where fifty years ago the first they were  
Of voyagers, whose feet did ever tread  
These savage shores)—that here on this south head  
Should stand an English farm-hut; and that there  
On yon north shore, a barrack tow'r should peer;  
Still more had they this simple Tablet read,  
Erected by their own compatriots born,  
Colonists here of a discordant state,  
Yet big with virtues (though the flow'ry name  
Which Science left it, has become a scorn  
And hissing to the nations), if our Great  
Be Wise and Good. So fairest Rome became!

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APPENDICES

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CHARLES LAMB  
REVIEWS THE FIRST FRUITS  
FOR  
LEIGH HUNT'S EXAMINER

SUNDAY 16 JAN. 1820

---

WHOEVER thou art that hast transplanted the British wood-notes to the far-off forests which the Kangaroo haunts—whether thou art some involuntary exile that solaces his sad estrangement with recurrence to his native notes, with more wisdom than those Hebrews of old refused to sing their Sion songs in a strange land—or whether, as we rather suspect, thou art that valued friend of ours, who, in thy young time of life, together with thy faithful bride, thy newly “wedded flower,” didst, in obedience to the stern voice of duty, quit thy friends, thy family, thy pleasing avocations, the Muses with which thou wert as deeply smitten as any, we believe, in our age and country, to go and administer tedious justice in inauspicious unliterary THIEFLAND,\* we reclaim thee for our own, and gladly would transport thee back to thy native “fields,” and studies congenial to thy habits.

We know a merry captain, and co-navigator with Cook, who prides himself upon having planted the first

---

\* An elegant periphrasis for *the Bay*. Mr Coleridge led us the way—“Cloud-land, gorgeous land.”

pun in Otaheite. It was in their own language, and the islanders first looked at him, then stared at one another, and all at once burst out into a genial laugh. It was a stranger, and as a stranger they gave it welcome. Many a quibble of their own growth, we doubt not, has since sprung from that well-timed exotic. Where puns flourish, there must be no inconsiderable advance in civilisation. The same good results we are willing to augur from this dawn of refinement at Sydney. They were beginning to have something like a theatrical establishment there, which we are sorry to hear has been suppressed; for we are of opinion with those who think that a taste for such kind of entertainments is one remove at least from profligacy, and that Shakespeare and Gay may be as safe teachers of morality as the ordinary treatises which assume to instil that science. We have seen one of their play-bills (while the thing was permitted to last), and were affected by it in no ordinary degree, particularly in the omission of the titles of honour, which in this country are condescendingly conceded to the players. In their *Dramatis Personæ*, *Jobson* was played by Smith; *Lady Love-rule*, Jones; *Nell*, Wilkinson; gentlemen and lady performers alike curtailed of their fair proportions. With a little patronage, we prophesy, that in a very few years the histrionic establishment of Sydney would have risen in respectability; and the humble performers would, by tacit leave, or open permission, have been allowed to use the same encouraging affixes to their names, which dignify their prouder brethren and sisters in the mother country. What a moral advancement, what a lift in the scale, to a Braham or a Stephens of New South Wales, to write themselves *Mr* and *Miss*! The King here has it

not in his power to do so much for a commoner, no, not though he dub him a Duke.

The "First Fruits" consist of two poems. The first celebrates the plant *epacris grandiflora*; but we are no botanists, and perhaps there is too much matter mixed up in it from the *Midsummer Night's Dream* to please some readers. The thefts are indeed so open and palpable, that we almost recur to our first surmise, that the author must be some unfortunate wight, sent on his travels for plagiarisms of a more serious complexion. But the old matter and the new blend kindly together; and must, we hope, have proved right acceptable to more than one

... Among the Fair

Of that young land of Shakespeare's tongue.

We select for our readers the second poem; and are mistaken if it does not relish of the graceful hyperboles of our elder writers.

[Here Lamb quotes *The Kangaroo in full.*] . . . .

We can conceive it to have been written by Andrew Marvell, supposing him to have been banished to Botany Bay, as he did, we believe, once meditate a voluntary exile to Bermuda. See his fine poem, "Where the remote Bermudas ride."

\* \* \* \*

[Lamb 'signs' himself with four asterisks in the Examiner. Cf. reference to this review in the letter below. —Ed.]

## A LETTER TO THIEFLAND

London, 16 Aug., 1820.

Dear Field,—Captain Ogilvie, who conveys this note to you, and is now paying for the first time a visit to your remote shores, is the brother of a Gentleman intimately connected with the family of the *Whites*, I mean of Bishopsgate Street—and you will much oblige them and myself by any service or civilities you can shew him.

I do not mean this for an answer to your warm-hearted Epistle, which demands and shall have a much fuller return. We received your Australian First Fruits, of which I shall say nothing here, but refer you to \*\*\*\* of the *Examiner*, who speaks our mind on all public subjects. I can only assure you that both Coleridge and Wordsworth, and also C. Lloyd, who has lately reappeared in the poetical horizon, were hugely taken with your Kangaroo.

When do you come back full of riches and renown, with the regret of all the honest, and all the other part of the colony? Mary swears she shall live to see it.

Pray are you the King's or Queen's men in Sidney? Or have thieves no politics? Man, don't let this lie about your room for your bed sweeper or Major Domo to see, he mayn't like the last paragraph.

This is a dull and lifeless scroll. You shall have soon a tissue of truth & fiction impossible to be extricated, the interleavings shall be so delicate, the partitions perfectly invisible [*? invisible*], it shall puzzle you till you return & [then] I will not explain it. Till then a ... adieu, with kind rem<sup>brces</sup> of me both to you & ...

[Signature and a few words torn off.]

## EDITION of 1823

THESE CHANGES in the text of the two original poems (excluding minor details of punctuation and capitalisation) Field obviously meant as improvements:

p. 3: *2nd ed. extends quotations by long pieces from Chaucer, Akenside and Wither.*

l. 4: *desart to desert*

l. 8: *vegetable to vegetative*

l. 10: *gather'd to murder'd*

p. 4, l. 5: *palmy to leafy*

l. 27: *footnote extended.*

p. 5, l. 6 *et seq. 2nd. ed. has:*

... Flower,

That opens only after rain,

Once, and never blows again;

Shuts too at early ev'ning's hour,

Soon as the Sun has lost its power,

p. 6, l. 7–8: *2nd. ed. inserts:*

Peri or fairies came from th' East,

D'Herbelot tells us so at least;

l. 8: *For to And*

l. 10: *her to Mab's*

l. 17: *salt green to salt-green*

p. 7, l. 13 *et seq. 2nd. ed. has:*

... juice; more med'cinal

Than moly or than haemony—that moly

That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave

To disenthral his crew from Circe's charms,

Or than that haemony of sovran use

'Gainst the enchantments of her son, great Comus;

Th' epacris, whose least dew-drop has the virtue

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p. 7, l. 22: *2nd. ed. adds:*

Dian that's Lady of the Leaf,  
As Love is of the Flower Chief.  
The Flower lives for half a day,  
"The Life is in the Leaf" for aye.

p. 9, l. 7: would *to* should

p. 10, l. 4-5: *2nd. ed. inserts:*

Or Labyrinthine Minotaur,  
With which great Theseus did war,

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### A NOTE FOR BOTANISTS

THE *epacris grandiflora*, Barron Field's 'wedded flower' of the first poem, appears to be what is now called the *epacris longiflora*, or Native Fuchsia.

The 'fringed violet' is certainly *fimbriatum*, but we, who, like Lamb, are no botanists, would doubt its title to *arthropodium*. Our poet's description fits rather the *thysanotus tuberosus*.

### A NOTE FOR WITS

LAMB'S 'merry captain,' the intrepid pioneer of pun-making in the coral seas, was James Burney (1750-1821), who sailed with Cook on two voyages, and, if we may reason from his proclivities, intimately frequented the Elian fields. Punsters and historians will hear with sadness that Captain Burney's gallant and inaugural witticism has been irrecoverably lost.

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